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RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001263

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL/SINGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/16/2018
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: BET EL SETTLEMENT: NEW ROAD, SMALL-SCALE HOUSING
CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS

REF: 07 JERUSALEM 1755

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Jessica Lapenn, per reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: PolOff observed clearing work for planned housing and construction on a new road at Bet El settlement's entrance on July 15. Bet El mayor Moshe Rosenbaum told PolOff that settlers have been able to build "a little" inside the settlement but were warned by the GOI not to occupy the adjacent Givat Haor outpost. END SUMMARY.

"A Little" New Construction
and New Road in Progress

¶2. (C) PolOff observed bulldozers clearing land inside Bet El for housing construction and for a new road at the settlement's entrance on July 16. Mayor Moshe Rosenbaum said the new road is needed because "the existing entrance is too steep for GOI safety standards." (Comment: The new road also significantly increases the settlement's perimeter. End comment). Rosenbaum said he can build "a little" inside Bet El, but most young settlers (including two of his children) "were forced" by the lack of building permits to move into nearby outposts.

"Hill of Light" Outpost

¶3. (C) Rosenbaum said settlers have been using Givat Haor ("Hill of Light") outpost (Reftel) for religious ceremonies but had recently been "warned by the government" not to occupy it. Asked by PolOff about Amcit Palestinians in nearby al-Bireh who claim the land at Givat Haor belongs to them, Rosenbaum said the claim is "a lie." He said between 1948 and 1967 Jordan's King Hussein affixed Arab names to the land around Bet El to "appease the Arabs" but never formally handed over the land, and none of the Palestinian ownership claims are legitimate.

"We'll Win" If Not,
"There Will Be Blood"

¶4. (C) On West Bank settlement construction generally, Rosenbaum said "we're winning, and we'll win." "Palestinians can build illegally as much as they like because one day it will all be ours." He claimed that since the start of the Oslo process, 400,000 Palestinians have emigrated from the West Bank and blamed Palestinian corruption and poor leadership. "This is good for us," he added. Rosenbaum dismissed prospects for voluntary, compensated evacuation of Bet El and said if forced removal of settlers is contemplated, "there will be blood."
LAPENN